



The Essential Drugs Franchise: Building Links with Public and Private Sector Organizations*

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As a step toward improving access to essential medicines in Ghana, SEAM Ghana and GSMF International have joined to develop and implement a program seeking to convert 500 of existing Ghanaian private sector drug retail outlets (commonly known as chemical seller shops, or “chemical sellers”) into a franchise operation, running under the auspices of GSMF. The franchise concept is innovative and untested in Ghana as relates to the delivery of public health services. It entails the harnessing of private sector skills from “for-profit” organizations and applying these skills in concert with organizations whose mission is the provision of public service and/or other social purposes. The needs of professional support organizations also need to be incorporated into the process, and regulatory authorities involved in public health delivery must be included as well. One of the critical first steps toward building the program has been establishing relationships with these key groups, soliciting their ideas, and addressing their concerns in an effort to ensure support for the program among stakeholders.

* Poster originally displayed at the SEAM Conference 2003.